

Dedicated performing arts teachers do a better job

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Wakakirri is Australia's largest performing arts event for schools. The Artist in Residence (AIR) Program is our in-house program that provides schools with a performing arts teacher to guide students in creating their Story Dance leading up to and including the performance night. Many schools do not have a dedicated performing arts teacher, and studies show that students have a richer experience with the arts when their teachers are confident and skilled in specialist arts teaching.

The AIR program was created in response to increasing feedback from schools that a growing number of teachers were feeling unsupported, lacked confidence and/or the expertise to teach dance and drama or simply had too much else on their plates. Sound familiar? AIR places a dedicated performing arts facilitator into participating schools. The AIR facilitator takes care of all the planning, runs rehearsals and uses their professional experience outside of an educational setting to guide students in their Story Dance making.

Principal Andrew Smee from Kangaroo Valley Public School in NSW had this to say following their school's Wakakirri experience in 2017. "Kangaroo Valley Pub-



lic School chose to use the Wakakirri AIR Program as it was our first time taking part in Wakakirri. There was so much value in having Jacqui (our Artist in Residence Facilitator) as she was able to develop a wonderful Story Dance for the theme we had chosen. Her weekly visits were always highly anticipated by our staff and students. She was wonderfully creative and professional and her support throughout the process for our whole school was exemplary. We would highly recommend the AIR program."

An additional benefit of AIR is that once a teacher has experienced the AIR

Program, many have the confidence to take on Wakakirri with their own students in future years providing a rich experience and relationship building tool for classroom teachers and their students alike.

If you would like to find out more about the Wakakirri Artist in Residence Program, contact us on 1800 650 979 or info@wakakirri.com. Mention this *Education Today* article when you book and receive five students FREE*. (*Conditions apply: Minimum booking of 30 students)

www.wakakirri.com

Dorothea Mackellar poetry competition turns 34

The Dorothea Mackellar poetry awards, now in their 34th year, is Australia's oldest and largest poetry competition for school aged students. Attracting upwards of 10,000 entries per year, the competition is open from March to June each year with an optional theme and is judged by independent literary figures who are appointed every two years.

This year's theme is *I Have Promises To Keep* a line from a work by American poet Robert Frost, but it's optional and students are welcome to go where their imagination takes them.

This year's judges are James Roy, children's books author, and Leonie Tyle, a librarian, reviewer, speaker, editor and publisher.



The competition began in the north west NSW town of Gunnedah, where the Mackellar family had rural holdings, and is run by a volunteer committee with a part time project officer. Its aim is to encourage a love of poetry and creative writing among young people and also to promote a love of country.

The awards culminate in a presentation ceremony for which winners and their families are hosted for a country visit with a high profile guest speaker. The ceremony is a signature event in National Literacy and Numeracy Week.

Entry is online at <https://dorothea.com.au/How-to-Enter-awards>, with Primary level entries also accepted by email.